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FAVORITE MUSIC ARTIST/GROUP: I love country music in general.

IF YOU WERE SENT TO AN ISLAND AND COULD ONLY BRING 3 THINGS, WHAT WOULD YOU BRING: Chapstick, a knife, and a friend.

STRANGEST THING YOU BELIEVED AS A CHILD:

That all spiders are poisonous.

BIGGEST PET PEEVE: When people don't use their words.

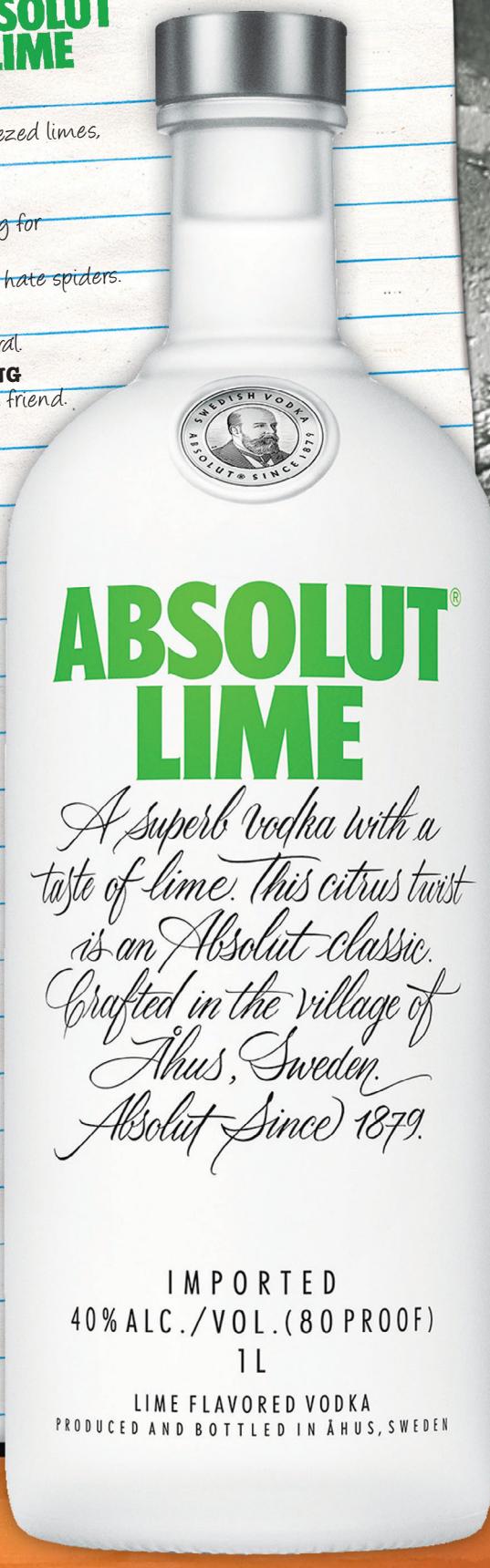
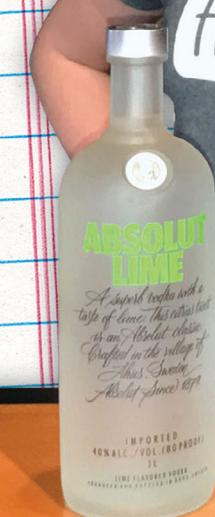
CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE SEEN FROM BEHIND THE BAR:
Somebody getting caught cheating. It was like a movie scene came to life.

BEST HANGOVER CURE: Honestly, The Herkimer's bloody.

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OF THE WEEK

Amber



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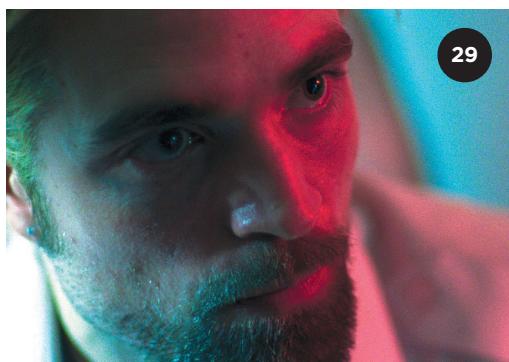
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By Chris Nietupski

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THE SHORTLIST



ADAM IVERSON

THE STAT SHEET

2,100

Number of Minnesota acres devoted to growing industrial hemp, up from 47 last year.

54

Percentage of Americans who believe confederate monuments should be preserved in public places.

13%

How much higher violent crime rates are in right-to-carry concealed weapons states, compared to non-carry states, over the past 10 years.

9

Percentage of Americans who believe it's acceptable to hold neo-Nazi or white supremacist views.

**"Yes, I'd like to see a monument to satin!
Gay pride!"**

Reader John Rowe responds to "Reject the monument to satin": Satanic Temple shares hysterical Belle Plaine monument hate mail," at citypages.com

THE MUSLIM MENACE

THE CONSERVATIVE WEBSITE World Net Daily bills itself as a "Free press for a free people." Much of that involves keeping its readers fact-free.

Last week, the site revisited the old trope that Cedar-Riverside is a "no-go zone" under rule of Sharia law, a place where cops and Christians are afraid to frolic. The evidence: A weird white guy from Georgia once pestered his neighbors about adhering to his own strict version of Islam. Somali leaders shut him down.

But World Net managed to transform that single nutjob into a place "where Shariah cops make house checks." For cowering conservatives fearful of religious freedom, that's enough to believe in a land under siege.

POPULAR STORIES

AT CITYPAGES.COM

OLIVIA MUNN, ex-girlfriend of Aaron Rodgers, expertly trolls Packers fans

What white allies can learn from **TINA FEY'S** cake-eating sketch

Al Franken tells Bill Maher: "I've known for weeks that

TRUMP IS A TERRIBLE PRESIDENT"

20 things you say that make you **A MINNESOTAN**

Minneapolis lawyer behind **NEO-NAZI RECORD LABEL** "no longer works" at law firm

THE LONELY LIFE

At St. Paul's last porn video store, business is not booming

Lonely is the retail porn business at Video Lease II on West Seventh Street in St. Paul. Owner Jeff Noreen has operated in the same space since 1983. It's mid-morning on a weekday and Noreen has the store, the last of its kind in Minnesota's second largest city, all to his lonesome.

"We're still in business, but just barely in business," he says. "It's mainly because I'm stubborn and I provide jobs for people who need jobs and I provide rent for my landlord. But you wouldn't start a business like this now."

Back in the day, rentals drove sales. Noreen was already using a blue and yellow color scheme when Blockbuster came to town. He peddled "Cockbusters" to fend off the national retailer. His movie titles, numbering in the tens of thousands, ranged from *Beauty and the Beast* to *The Devil in Miss Jones*. Blockbuster would put a hurt

on Video Lease II's business. Netflix would do the same years later.

Thirty years ago was the halcyon era of porn retailing, when XXX starlet Marilyn Chambers alone could keep the cash register busy. Today, he says, there isn't a single porn star who can drive that kind of traffic.

"The '80s were good," he says. "We rented and sold VHS and beta and Atari games. We rented out the old kind of VHS machines that had like piano fingers on them, the really old kind that cost \$600 to buy. I'd say then, [porn] videos, most of it from rentals, accounted for 35 to 40 percent of all we brought in, because in the early days movies cost \$65 to buy. Today, we sell more DVDs than rent."

What's also changed is the business' dependence on porn. These days, 90 percent of his cash flow comes from porn DVDs, mainly sales. His X-rated "virus-free DVDs" retail three for \$25.



Free internet porn makes for vicious competition

GEORGE DOYLE

"All my customers are men now," says Noreen. "They're usually some middle-aged married guy. We used to have some women coming in. They were generally the bull dyke kind. But they stopped coming in for some reason."

With online purveyors like Pornhub and Pornmd satisfying America's appetite for free porn, Noreen understands his store's survival rests on the relationship he's established with "thousands of loyal customers"

over the past 35 years.

"It's hard to compete with free, but people don't always like to use computers," he says. "The picture quality isn't as good. People don't want to be tied in with the internet. We offer total privacy. That's the advantage of coming to a store like ours as opposed to going online. I do kind of look at myself as utility. Our customers keep coming back because they appreciate the service." -CORY ZUROWSKI

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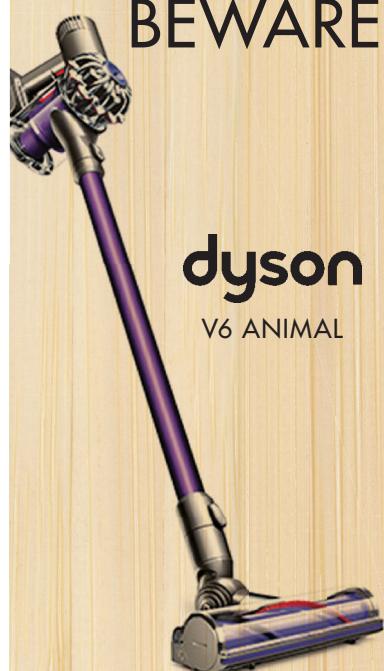
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Counterpoint: Don't make your bed

An open letter to the University of Minnesota's incoming freshman class

Students, allow me to welcome you to the University of Minnesota, to adulthood, and to the first day of the rest of your wretched lives.

By now, many of you will have seen a viral video making the rounds on Facebook, featuring a college commencement speech by Admiral William McRaven, a retired naval officer. McRaven is far more accomplished than I am, and a better public speaker. He has an awesome name, he's 30 years older than me but looks 10 years younger. Plus, he sort of killed Osama bin Laden.

But believe me when I say he is dead fucking wrong with this claptrap about making your bed.

McRaven tells his audience that if they "want to change the world," they should start by making the bed, first thing each morning. This one simple act, he says, will start their day with a sense of accomplishment, and will pave the way for more success.

"By the end of the day, that one task completed will have turned into many tasks completed." That's what McRaven says. Know what I say? Don't bother.

Graduation speakers have been encouraging ambitious young people to get out there and change the world forever. And the world has changed. It sucks.

To Admiral McRaven's credit, back in 2014 when he gave his speech, the world was a different place. A more hopeful one. Our president was respected. People occasionally seemed interested

in saving the planet. Prince was alive. So were, like, 16 characters who got killed off from *Game of Thrones*. There were fewer Kardashians.

And now? A third of Americans are hooked on opiates, and the other two thirds are hooked on *The Big Bang Theory*, which is ironic, because most of them don't believe in the actual Big Bang Theory.

By the time you graduate, most of

you kids will be, what, \$50,000 in debt? That's how we do education in America: Before you make money, you have to borrow a bunch. Not that you kids are ever going to make much money. By the time you graduate, there will only be three jobs in America: Insurance claims adjuster, Mexican border wall cleaner, and working for Google as the secretary for a robot.

And every single dollar you make will be spent paying what it costs to rent a place in Minneapolis. Can I interest you in paying \$1,400 a month to live in a converted former fireplace? Does that sound like a place you'd like to wake up and make the bed?

Here in college, you will have the chance to learn all kinds of historical facts and scientific figures. Skip that stuff. The more you know, the more depressed you'll get. Besides, no one cares about facts anymore. Feelings, hunches, opinions: Those are what's important. Mostly the ones about fantasy football draft picks.

Here, watch. Here are some facts. There's an iceberg the size of Delaware that just broke off Antarctica, we get

hit with a once-in-a-lifetime storm every summer, and North Korea has a bomb the size of a sandwich that could capsize Hawaii. Feel better?

And into this morass, we are led by a trust fund baby who has decided that

it's the banks and insurance companies who need protection from us, that his daughter is a diplomat, and that freedom means hunting endangered species with grenade-throwing drones.

This is the part where I'm supposed to give you some rousing message about how in these challenging times, America and the world need people like you to rise to the challenge, to get out there and change the world. But let's be realistic.



Mike Mullen

We're not rising to any challenges, and we seem to be making things worse. Let's just acknowledge that and start lowering our expectations.

If you manage to move around your house without walking into walls because you're watching a cat video on your phone, think of that as a success.

Consider getting good at video games; I hear you can make money that way now. You can at least safely pass the time without venturing out into the street and risking getting run over by an actual fucking Nazi.

Did I forget to mention that part? The Nazis are back. So is measles.

And so I say to you, the graduating class of 2021, you should not only not start every morning by making your bed. You should try not to start your morning at all. Give up! Take selfies! See if there's still some ice cream in the freezer. Tweet something.

The world is a terrible, terrifying place. I think it's time we admit that. Don't make the bed. Get back in it. Actually, I think you can just order ice cream online. CP

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CRAZY AS LOONS



AARON LAVINSKY/STAR TRIBUNE

THE BEATEN, BRUISED, AND BUOYANT FANS OF MN UNITED KEEP SOCCER ALIVE IN THE STATE

By Chris Nietupski

LOONS MIDFIELDER JOHAN VENEGAS CAUGHT THE BALL NEAR THE CENTER CIRCLE ALL ALONE.

A rare luxury up to that point.

Yet there he was roaming freely in the 79th minute on the rain-soaked grass under a gloomy Portland, Oregon, sky.

Venegas glided with the ball at his feet down the middle of the Providence Park pitch, untouched for 10 long strides. Up ahead he spotted Christian Ramirez, and a chance to change Minnesota United FC's fortunes after they had gone down 2-0 to the hometown Timbers. Venegas deftly slotted Ramirez a perfect pass just outside the 18-yard box.

Receiving it like a precious gift, Ramirez, a fan favorite holdover from the franchise's minor league days, took a half step back and gently knocked the ball 18 inches with one touch of his left foot. He pirouetted to face the net and took aim at just a sliver of space past two Timbers' defenders. Launching a low, hooking liner, Ramirez sent the ball whistling toward the bottom right corner of the goal mouth.

As the ball evaded the diving goalie and rocked the back of the netting, time paused. Shocked silence settled over the sellout Portland crowd. In the next instant, Ramirez's teammates mobbed him, celebrating the Loons' first-ever goal in their first-ever game in Major League Soccer, North

America's premier league in the sport.

Directly above the celebration, in the top corner of section 223, an explosion of sound echoed off the overhang of the converted minor league baseball stadium roof as 150 of Minnesota soccer's most ardent supporters released years of pent-up anxiety.

SAVE AFTER SAVE

The fact that the Loons would go on to give up three more goals in the final throes of that game, eventually losing 5-1, was a minor barb for a fan base that had suffered far worse.

Ramirez's 180-degree turn toward the net and ensuing shot signified the turnaround of professional soccer in Minnesota on the sport's grandest stage.

That day in early March, hours before kickoff in Portland, Ben Krouse-Gagne greeted Minnesota soccer supporters just inside Yur's Bar, a seedy dive a half-mile down the road from Providence Park. While handing out free scarves and drink tickets, Krouse-Gagne, a member of United's oldest supporters' group, the Dark Clouds, assessed the occasion.

"There's nothing like a game on the road. Nothing. Like. It."

To revisit the history of professional soccer in Minnesota, one could argue there's nothing like any game. Period.

The ill-starred journey of the state's most passionate soc-

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COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

Phil Cross and Ben Krouse-Gagne

cer fans begins with Minnesota United's predecessor, the now-defunct Minnesota Thunder. While the Thunder existed as barnstorming amateurs for their first four years, the team eventually fielded professional squads starting in 1995. Small but consistent crowds of 3,000–4,000 fans per game grew used to success, too, even if "success" meant runner-up finishes in something called the Sizzling Nine Championship.

After winning the league title in 1999 and making six championship game appearances, the Thunder stopped scoring.

From 2005 to 2009, the team competed with little success in the United Soccer League-1, two rungs below Major League Soccer. At the close of the 2009 season, after several years of failing to finish higher than seventh in the league standings, rumors surfaced of financial trouble.

Owner and real estate developer Dean Johnson downplayed the team's struggles, publicly displaying confidence in the direction of the team and future financing, but reports emerged that players, staff, and vendors were going unpaid. In early November 2009, the website insidemnsoccer.com reported, "The Minnesota Thunder have no general manager, no coach, three employees and a boat load of bills. Will they survive, and will Dean Johnson ask for help?"

Just two days later media and fans learned that all players had been released from their contracts.

Johnson vanished. The club existed in name and on debt ledgers only. Then-general manager Djorn Buchholz achieved folk-hero status among the longtime faithful after he put the travel bill for the club's final road game on his personal credit card.

In 2010, with a growing fan base but no team, the future of professional soccer in Minnesota looked as bleak as ever.

That is, until the nonprofit National Sports Center in Blaine announced its intention to own and operate a new team for the following season. Though the NSC Minnesota Stars would play in the same

stadium as the Minnesota Thunder, this was a clean break. The Stars would take the field in the temporary USSF Division 2 Professional League.

More changes would follow. A year after the team's rebirth, the Stars climbed to the North American Soccer League (NASL), one rung below the MLS. When the sports center ownership group could not meet the new league's financial requirements, the NASL agreed to take over ownership of the Stars for three additional years.

The ups and downs took their toll in the stands. Despite the Stars' surprising run to the championship in 2011, attendance dwindled to under 2,000 per game, one of the lowest averages in the league. In 2012, with no new owner lined up, the Minnesota Stars again reached the championship final under a clouded future.

Then, just like that, professional soccer in the state of Minnesota was saved again.

UNITED AT LAST

After a year away, Buchholz returned to the Minnesota Stars in 2011 as the CEO, GM, and team president, tasked with keeping the franchise afloat as it looked to usher in a new era.

Finally, in November 2012 at an introductory press conference that Buchholz would call "one, if not the most important day in the history of Minnesota soccer," the Stars and the NASL welcomed new owner Bill McGuire. The billionaire and former UnitedHealth Group CEO was new to soccer, but familiar with the challenges of a small, fledgling business, after taking over the small UnitedHealth Care firm in 1989 and building it into one of the largest healthcare providers in the world.

Though known almost as much at the time for a large corporate buyout under a shroud of legal issues in 2006, McGuire had nearly disappeared from the public eye for years. Buying the United gave McGuire a chance to publicly reshape his much-maligned image.

The team was also rebranded, as the Minnesota United FC (the Loons). Attendance skyrocketed, year after year, to the point where crowds of 8,500-plus were the norm for the final three seasons at the NSC.

In October of 2015, McGuire and the city of St. Paul announced plans for a \$150 million stadium for the team. McGuire's stadium gambit advanced the process of bidding on an MLS expansion franchise with the help of a collection of investors,

including Twins owners the Pohlad family; Timberwolves owner Glen Taylor (who also owns City Pages); and former Minnesota Wild investor Glen Nelson and his daughter Wendy Carlson Nelson, of the Carlson hospitality company. In 2016, the group won the bid over not only other potential expansion cities, but a competing proposal from the Minnesota Vikings.

Because the soccer gods seem to delight in the torment of Minnesotans, the team's very name and logo were almost immediately in jeopardy. MLS officials worried adding a third "United" moniker to the league—following D.C. United and Atlanta United—would make one too many. When the MLS filed the trademark "Minnesota FC" in early 2016, many also worried that the crest, a loon staring up at the North Star, would get shot down.

After months of deliberation and the persistence of diehard fans, MLS agreed to let the franchise keep its name and logo. The Loons were officially a major league team.

"THIS TEAM SUCKS"

The MLS announcement breathed new energy into the fan base. However, the coaches and front-office staff faced the daunting task of simultaneously managing the final season of the NASL campaign while preparing to field a competitive roster to compete in the MLS.

The result for Minnesota was a bunch of young draft picks thrust into the spotlight, plus holdover NASL players making the leap to the big leagues. Several players signed up so late, they had not visited Minnesota before joining the team on the road for preseason camp in warmer climates.

To no one's surprise, an expansion team with the 19th-lowest payroll in a 22-team league failed to stir the imagination of the



COLIN MICHAEL SIMMONS

national media.

And if the first performance in Portland did little to inspire, the following match against Atlanta United FC further tanked expectations.

Though Atlanta had also joined MLS ahead of the 2016 season, the team had nearly three years to build toward the MLS before playing a match. Atlanta had instant momentum in the stands, selling more than 30,000 season tickets before their inaugural home game—approximately three times the number Minnesotans purchased. And the Atlanta front office rewarded this early loyalty, spending on a roster ranked eighth-highest in the league that could compete immediately.

Atlanta could score immediately too, as they did twice in the first 13 minutes, blowing by Loons defenders who slipped and slid on the snow-covered TCF Bank Stadium turf.

Left: Reid Allen; right: Abe Opoti

Adding injury to insult, Minnesota lost its starting goalie John Alvbage to a gruesome laceration above his knee. He would never play for the Loons again. The Loons lost 6–1.

Matthew Eides, his girlfriend, and a couple of older supporters affectionately referred to as Grey Clouds, were watching that game at a bar on the East Coast. Knowing they'd be seeing the Loons play live in a couple of weeks when the team traveled to New England, they contemplated how to announce their presence in the stands.

"We would just watch our team melt down," he said. "And we knew they were probably gonna get plastered in New England. So what do we do?"

They briefly considered hoisting up a banner that read, "This Team Sucks,"

before scrapping that idea and landing on six simple words, printed in white on a black background. This past March, the banner rippled through the cool breeze and mist in a corner of Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, underneath a dozen black- and blue-clad Minnesota fans.

"We're Just Happy to Be Here," it read.

But were they, even after the Loons suffered another humiliating early-season loss at the hands of the New England Revolution?

Eides' other sign idea would not have been wrong: The Loons Do Kind of Suck. Despite a modest uptick from those gloomy days in March, they're still hovering near the bottom of the league standings. They could for the foreseeable future.

"People know us for putting up with immense heartbreak and resiliency," Eides says of the fans who've been through this before. "And the prestige is spreading."

The banner became an instant hit on social media. Eides had T-shirts made and sold them online, with all the proceeds going to the nonprofit Immigration Equality.

Eides describes himself as "very proudly Minnesotan," while speaking on the phone from his adopted home of Washington, D.C. His enthusiasm bubbles over to the point that he's apologizing repeatedly for his excitement. In 2011 he started following the painful drama of the NSC-owned Stars and decided to ramp up his support through the "dying gasps."

"I just sort of decided to become the East Coast supporter for Minnesota soccer," he said.

That included attending away games in earlier days with limited company. He'd show up with "usually one or two fans with a giant Minnesota flag pissing everyone else off."

Now, as an unofficial leader of the East Coast contingent of Dark Clouds that spans

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from Massachusetts down to South Carolina, Eides gathers fans to watch and attend games on the eastern seaboard.

Back here, MN United officially lists three supporter groups on its website, and they're known to have varying affiliations with each. The legacy Dark Clouds are most closely connected; however, the team has also embraced the more aggressive, passionate support of the newer True North Elite.

Several unofficial supporter groups also exist, including the Mill City Ultras, a group that broke from existing fan clubs over fears that those groups blurred the line between fans and PR shills.

How long will the fan clubs last if the team continues to suck?

Eides is not concerned. "I don't think the hardcore people will ever leave."

DRINK 90 DRINK

The 45-passenger coach bus stocked with coolers of donated local craft beer and a keg of nitro coffee leaves St. Paul bound for Kansas City at 4:45 a.m. on a Saturday morning in June.

A police escort meets United supporters, led by Krouse-Gagne, at the bus for the walk toward the Cauldron, Sporting Kansas City's supporters' group.

A voice from the Kansas City camp shouts seemingly the only marching orders needed:

"United! There's plenty of beer. Get some in your cups!"

This deliberate outreach from an archrival's fan base, called "Drink 90 Drink," seems unprecedented in major American sports. The official trip rules remind United supporters to "not be an asshole" as the Cauldron rolls out the welcome wagon.

A twenty-something guy sporting a personalized baby-blue road jersey from United's NASL days talks of coming down from the North Shore because he knew he couldn't miss the first bus trip. Two buddies who grew up on Minnesota soccer came along to strengthen their bond after one moved away from the Twin Cities to Duluth.

The Dark Clouds in front of their charter bus before heading to Chicago

Despite standing at about 6-foot-4, another supporter is barely recognizable because, for once, his young son is not attached to him in a Baby Bjorn. Instead he's hauling a growler full of a Belgian Dubbel that he's happy to dole out. A young entrepreneur has no problem selling off-brand scarves featuring the red eyes of a loon, despite Kansas City's sweltering mugginess.

In this new MLS era, Minnesota's legacy fans are like early adopters, who stuck through the glitchy early stages of the product. Newcomers are part of the beta test. All are encouraged to buy in, to see where pro soccer in Minnesota goes next.

"Trying to get everyone who travels with us to feel welcome is not always an easy feat to accomplish," Phil Cross says. "Some don't know very many people or are hesitant to reach out and begin a conversation with others."

Cross, caretaker of one of the many expertly coiffed beards on the bus, relies heavily on those legacy United supporters in these situations.

"[They've] met so many different kinds of people that they know how to reach out and make a newcomer feel that sense of welcome that we want every traveler to feel," he says.

"It's a very grassroots community," says Teresa Petersen, member of the Dark Clouds and copyeditor for FiftyFive.one, a website devoted to Minnesota soccer news. "You get to meet new people, even from other teams. It's a very basic level of bonding and connecting."

Petersen's loyalty came by way of a different kind of football.

"Growing up a Vikings fan, then moving to Seattle I couldn't see the Vikings on TV, and I wasn't going to be a Seahawks fan because that would be wrong," Petersen says. "So I had this sports void in my life."

She happened upon soccer when she started dating a man whose parents emi-

grated from Germany.

"He said, 'OK, there is this tournament coming up where there's soccer every day for a month and you can either watch with me or I'll see you when it's over.' So, I said show me this soccer stuff."

That tournament, of course, was the World Cup, a global spectacle watched by hundreds of millions internationally, but only a blip on most American sports fans' radars in 1998. Petersen watched during the wee hours of a West Coast morning as the tournament played out in France.

Soon she was the one waking up her boyfriend so they could get to the bar before early kickoffs.

She cites the pace and beauty of the game and the way the action fills up the 90 minutes as causes for her quick adoption of the sport.

Years later, when the Thunder traveled out to the West Coast for its Cascadia Tour, Petersen, by then a full-on fanatic, caught up with some Minnesotans in Seattle who joined her tailgate for a game versus the hometown Sounders. Within a month she was moving back to Minnesota, and those same fans welcomed her immediately. She has been involved with the Dark Clouds ever since.

"It's so much more than the final score," she says. "It is hard to describe it without saying it's like a religion."

A BAND OF MISFITS

After 140 boozed-up supporters pose for a photo, they enter the stadium together. Early-arriving Kansas City fans look on with bewilderment and rapture as Loons fans beat drums and aggressively wave dozens of blue-and-black flags while marching and chanting their way toward section 124.

Minnesotans who earlier that day had stared at each other in silence outside the bus locked arms and swung back and forth as a "capo," or head cheerleader, roared into a megaphone.

"M! N! U-F-C!" "M! N! U-F-C!"

"The fact that [all fans] feel they can jump in on that [rallying cry]? This is their way to get their foot in the door," Jeff Reuter says.

Reuter covers the action for MLSSoccer.com as a writer for United home games. He also lends expert commentary to the FiftyFive.one podcast. But here, he's just a spectator, having made the trek down with his family.

"You could see Sporting [KC] fans weren't used to such a loud supporters' section," he says. "They were covering their ears and leaning away to avoid going deaf. It was really cool to see just how into it the traveling fans were."

Krouse-Gagne eventually makes his way to the top of the supporter section, looking exhausted as he surveys what he's helped create. He estimates that he and Cross

have put in 20 hours of volunteer time and explains the coordination going on behind the scenes between the supporter groups, trip sponsors, the front offices of both teams, and MLS, planning each step down to the minute.

"At the end of the day, the success of the whole experience won't rest in a victory," Cross says. "But in keeping all traveling supporters safe and content from the beginning of the trip to its conclusion."

MLS and its teams have actively worked to combat the intentionally unruly and violent behavior that persists in European and South American leagues. That means rules are stricter and vary from stadium to stadium.

"You're a traveling band of misfits because you have to recreate your support every time," Eides says.

Is it worth it?

It is to "people who want to stand with

"IT'S A VERY GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY. YOU GET TO MEET NEW PEOPLE, EVEN FROM OTHER TEAMS. IT'S A VERY BASIC LEVEL OF BONDING AND CONNECTING."

others having fun at a match, rather than sitting around like a bunch of wet blankets."

Krouse-Gagne admits that at times, the game of soccer can be methodical, even slow. However, throughout his years supporting the Stars and the Loons, he started noticing one constant through all 90 minutes: that vocal group of banner-waving, drum-beating fans.

"It's a community for sure," Krouse-Gagne says of the Dark Clouds. "They welcomed me with open arms."

Pregame tailgates, postgame libations, and 90 minutes of chanting and cheering in between soon followed. Then Krouse-Gagne, who fundraises for the University of Minnesota's Department of Neuroscience by day, found his true passion of raising the profile of professional soccer in Minnesota by night. He began participating in the monthly outreach with the philanthropic arm of the Dark Clouds called the Silver Lining, organizing, among other things, relief missions to Haiti. He also traveled to away games, and is tasked with helping create stress-free, affordable options for supporters interested in following the team on the road.

"[On the road] you have a lot of time to get to know each other," he says. And he believes it makes a difference to the team to have them there.

"The team appreciates that you're encroaching on rival territory," Krouse-

Gagne says. "For me, it doesn't matter how the team does."

He doubled down in a protective tone.

"If you think about your own life, when you need the most support is not when you got a promotion or job, but when you got laid off."

That mentality gives a built-in advantage to this newest iteration of Minnesota soccer, as it braces for what could be a long stretch of painful results.

THE GAME WASN'T CLOSE

With a lineup heavy on reserves due to injuries, suspensions, and international team duties, United appeared to be playing a step slow against Sporting Kansas City. In the end, the Loons would get outshot 21-3, wilting in the early June humidity.

But the spirit in the stands never withered. Late in the game, Christian Ramirez, dubbed "Superman" by fans, received a pass deep inside enemy territory. A cavernous opening appeared in front of the net. United supporters presumptively cheered the expectant goal, only to collectively groan as the ball sailed over the net.

Even had the ball gone in, it would only have provided a slight cosmetic upgrade to an ugly 3-0 defeat.

Each SKC goal seemed only to elevate the cheering from Minnesota's band of misfits. United fans broke out in chants of "You're not singing over there!" taunting Kansas City fans when it became clear the little group tucked in one corner of a nearly 20,000-seat stadium was making the most noise.

"I speak to the players and it does make a difference and they can hear that," Reuter says.

After the game, United players take their familiar direct route across the pitch to salute their supporters in the corner. Eventually, even members of SKC's team come over and acknowledge the fans' efforts.

When you've committed your money and 15-plus hours on a bus for a 90-minute game that you know your team will likely lose, it's fulfilling to see the appreciation from the team.

So are these supporters truly "just happy to be here"? For now, yes. The general consensus is the team has a three-year grace period with the fan base to build a winner.

But for the diehards? You're consistently reminded of their resiliency.

"[A loss] doesn't change the way I feel about the team, or diminish the amount of fun I had on the trip," Petersen says. "We kept singing and cheering because we still care about our team and we want them to know we're still behind them."

Which is why the supporters load back up on the bus immediately following the game for the seven-plus hour trek to Minnesota already planning the next road trip.

It must be true, what they say. There's nothing like it. **CP**



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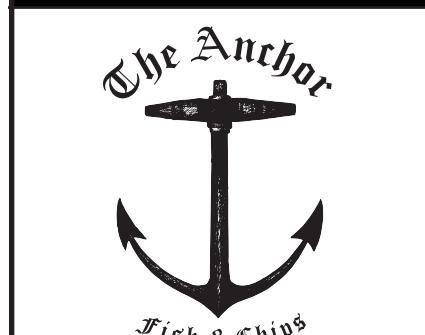
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The State Fair comes but once a year, so this is no time to screw around with gimmickry and pretenders. You want the real-deal fair fare and none of the nonsense. Below, we give you our list of the best new foods. Whip out your map of the fairgrounds and start planning.

10. Double Dose of Pork Belly

One-hundred percent ground pork belly burger topped with crisp smoked pork belly, pepper jack cheese, coleslaw, and pickled onions, served on a toasted bun. At RC's BBQ. \$7
Let's hear it for the noble hog, provider of incalculable meaty goodness, especially its deliciously fatty belly. It's a pig tummy twofer on this sammie, with smoky, satisfying results. The hockey-puck-sized patty boasts more flavor than your standard-issue burger, and it's draped by a bacon blanket of even more pork belly. The cool punch of

crisp, vibrant slaw and pickled red onions really sets it apart.

9. Sweet Corn Blueberry Éclair

Kernza flour éclair filled with sweet corn pastry cream and topped with blueberry glaze. At Farmers Union Coffee Shop. \$6.50
Though it looks like a Cronenbergian alien baby at first glance, the sweet corn blueberry éclair from Farmers Union is a beautiful dish. The iridescent slurry of blueberry on top is fresh and uncloying, and the dense, granular flour cake stands sturdy around

Clockwise from top left: Mini Sconuts at French Meadow; Double dose of pork belly at RC's BBQ; Bacon Fluffernutter at The Sandwich Stop; Giant Egg Roll on a Stick at Que Viet

a river of delicious sweet corn cream. The combination is uncharacteristically balanced for a State Fair food. Bring a beach towel though, 'cause this one is messy.

8. Sonoran Sausage: ONE.BAD.DOG

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Que Viet has had a knockout first year at the State Fair

LUCY HAWTHORNE

cheese, wrapped in bacon, baked, and served on a cornmeal-dusted bun with fresh corn salsa and a drizzle of avocado ranch sauce. At Sausage Sister & Me. \$7

If we walked away from the fair sporting cornmeal-coated fingers and faces, it's only because we literally scarfed down this incredibly good bad dog. Cheese-stuffed, bacon-encased, and dressed up with avocado ranch, it's arguably got too many shticks for one bun. Against all odds, it works. The fiery pepper jack and smoky sausage are meant to be together; the bacon shell is the rare one that makes the food better rather than just saltier and more caloric, and the crema-like drizzle tops it off with a bit of brightness. Even in a sea of sausage, this is one worth tracking down.

7. Mini Sconuts

Buttermilk scone holes filled with chocolate, marshmallow, and Nutella, deep-fried and topped with a dusting of powdered sugar. At French Meadow Bakery & Cafe. \$5 These generously sugar-powdered golden orbs contain molten multitudes. We're talkin' a gooey mélange of Nutella and marshmallow crème that bursts majestically when your teeth sink through the deep-fried shell. There's nothing particularly sconey about this dish, but who cares? You're basically getting artisan doughnut holes stuffed with melty, nutty, not-too-sweet filling worthy of the breakfast gods.

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6. Maple Cream Nitro Cold Press Coffee

Locally sourced heavy cream and maple syrup in a cold brew coffee infused with nitrogen. At Farmers Union Coffee Shop. \$6.50

The big knock on cold press is its stymying bitterness, a problem Farmers Union solved with soft whips of heavy cream and a generous touch of maple flavoring. Maple Cream Nitro Cold Press Coffee is supple and silky. You think such a concoction would take 10-15 minutes of barista time, but no, the folks manning the taps at Farmers

Union turn these out just as quick as you can order them.

5. Cranberry Wild Rice Meatballs

Swedish-style meatballs with cranberries and wild rice blend covered with Lingonberry Sauce. At Hamline Church Dining Hall. \$11.95, \$12.88 with tax

This is one of the few places at the fair where you get to eat off of real plates using metal utensils instead of flimsy plastic forks. And you get a whole meal for the price of two corn dogs. The tasty meatballs come with a choice of sides (mashed potatoes all the way), coleslaw, and a roll. There's always a line, but it moves along efficiently, if not always quickly. You can tell everyone working here takes great pride in their outpost at the fair, which is celebrating 120 years of feeding fairgoers. The meatballs are available at lunch and dinner, starting at 11 a.m.

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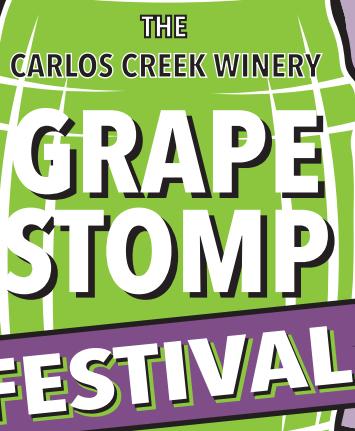
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FOOD

4. Bacon Fluffernutter

Grilled cinnamon bun sandwich with bacon, peanut butter, and marshmallow cream filling. At The Sandwich Stop. \$9

As painful as it is to admit that we enjoyed such a blatantly pandering flavor blast as this, we damn sure liked it. This pancake-y sandwich has gooey peanut butter, obnoxious powdered sugar, strips of bacon, and an unnecessary syrup dipping sauce. And yet! We gobbled it right up, spending the ensuing minutes giving our hands a "State Fair Bath" of spit and napkins. Somehow, we convinced ourselves that the protein in the peanut butter made it health food.

3. Pie'n the Sky Malt & Sundae

A sweet and tart mix of crunchy, spiced "airplane" cookies and lemon curd, topped with dark chocolate drizzle and served with vanilla ice cream as a sundae or malt. At Dairy Goodness Bar, located in the Dairy Building. \$5 for the sundae

Get this. Get this and never look back. Leave your family or friends or kids or whoever you brought with you to the fair. Take a few quiet moments to yourself and the 100,000 other fairgoers and luxuriate in the creaminess of real Minnesota ice cream, made all the better by a tart lemon curd, crumbles of Biscoff cookies, and a drizzle of dark chocolate. Everyone who eats this will be instantly happier and probably a better person.

2. Giant Gluten-Free Egg Rolls On a Stick

Exactly as described. At Que Viet. \$6

When it comes to quirky cuisine on a stick, the humble egg roll doesn't have the pizzazz of pizza on a stick, the match-made-in-heaven obviousness of bacon on a stick, or the timeless classic status of a Pronto Pup. You'd be forgiven for overlooking Que Viet—big mistake. These bad boys have tons of zesty, savory pork packed into a perfectly crispy, golden-brown shell. And to the dipping sauce, we issue an emphatic damn. It's sweet and tangy and practically good enough to drink once you're done dunking.

1. Slow-Roasted Pork Mole Tamale

Fresh corn tamale with slow-roasted pork, mole coloradito sauce, and black bean and pineapple relish. At Tejas Express. \$10

People peddle a lot of gimmicky bullshit at the fair, but this was the rare debut with no sticks or tricks—just an actually delicious, well-executed dish. The tender, juicy chicken and fluffy masa in this tamale were beautifully bolstered by hearty, earthy mole and super-fresh veggies. At 10 bucks, it's no steal, but as one of maybe three fair foods that won't make you hate yourself—and that could hold up as a menu standout all year round—it's also very worth it. **EP**



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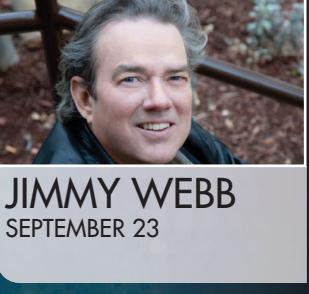
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A LIST

FRIDAY MetaCon gets geeky **P. 25**

SATURDAY Freddie Krueger heads to Parkway **P. 26**

MONDAY Wiener dog races at Canterbury **P. 27**

WEDNESDAY 8.30

COMEDY

SHANE TORRES

ACME COMEDY CO.

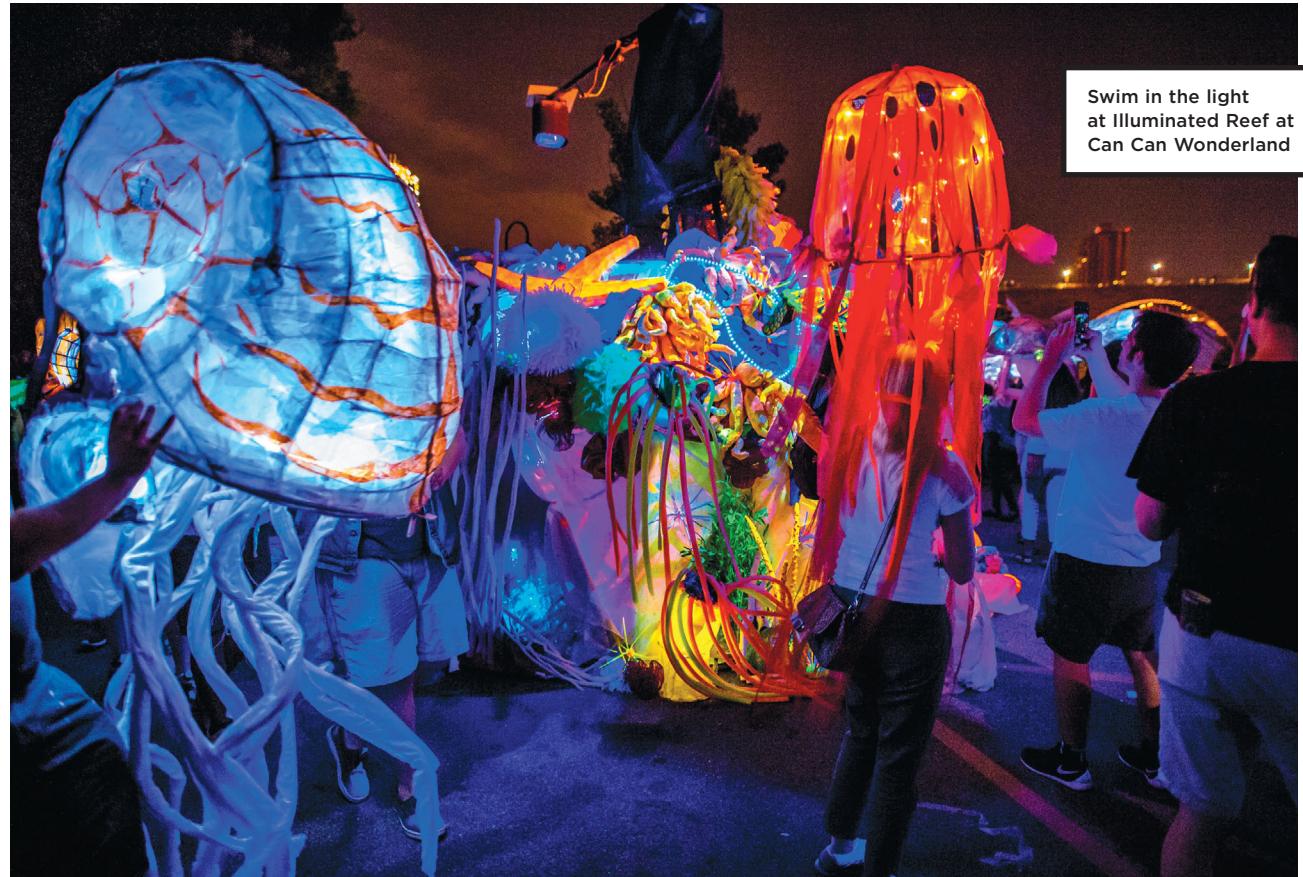
"I'm lucky in that I found what I wanted to do," says comedian and Fort Worth, Texas, native Shane Torres. "I never wanted to be a doctor or anything like that. I wasn't moved by a particular episode of *Scrubs*." While he recalls being funny as a kid, he was never the class clown. "I was more of an aimless goofball," he says. "I wasn't dying to entertain everybody. If there was someone funnier I'd be more submissive and let them be the funny person." When he was 13, he thought he was going to be a musician. "But that requires talent," he notes. Onstage these days, his set has become a little more observational and a little less biographical. His performance on *Conan* last year is a good example of the latter: "I love those bits, but that's not what I do for an hour," he says. "Now I'm trying to do a little less narrative and little more observation and opinion." His focus now is more on writing than simply telling "yarns," as he calls them. "I want to have a perspective outside of my firsthand experience and notice something and learn to write as opposed to reciting a story. That became a goal of mine a few years ago. I wanted to have concepts, not just stories." 18+. 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday** —P.F. WILSON

FILM

2017 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL SHORT FILM TOUR

BRYANT-LAKE BOWL THEATER

These films may be short, but they make an impact. Seven works totaling 95 minutes will screen each Wednesday at Bryant-Lake Bowl for the next three weeks. Some shorts are esoteric, others are parody, and there's even a naughty cartoon. Highlights include "Night Shift," which spends a day with a bathroom attendant at a Los Angeles nightclub. "Pussy" is an animated



Swim in the light at Illuminated Reef at Can Can Wonderland

MAX HAYNES

work of one girl's interrupted attempt at masturbating. "Come Swim" is the directorial debut of Kristen Stewart (yep, that Kristen Stewart). Other films tackle topics like technology, abortion, and high-diving into a pool. Grab a beer and take it all in at the back-room theater. 7 p.m. Wednesdays. \$8; \$6 IFP members. 810 W. Lake St., Minneapolis; 612-825-3737. **Through September 13** —JESSICA ARMBRISTER

COMEDY

CHRIS REDD

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

Chris Redd was born in St. Louis, but moved to suburban Chicago in second grade and fell in love with the Windy City. He originally set his sights on a career as a rap artist, but soon realized he wasn't quite 'hood enough. "I always wanted to be a thug," he tells an audience.

"I had a family full of thugs, and I'd chase them around. They never fully accepted me because I spent half my life in the suburbs. It's not gangster... to commute to the 'hood." He later performed with Second City before landing the role of Hunter the Hungry in the mockumentary film *Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping*. He moved to L.A. at the behest of that film's producer, Judd Apatow. Along the way, Redd has built a successful standup career. He marvels at L.A.'s weather. "The weather is so perfect all the time," he says on stage. "I realized how much I love the weather when I went home and was watching a football game with my homies. I realized there is no manly way to ask for a blanket." 18+; 21+ later shows. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday. \$13-\$22. 408 East Broadway,

Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday** —P.F. WILSON

THURSDAY 8.31

ART/GALLERY

SUBJECTIVE

PUBLIC FUNCTIONARY

For one night only, artist Lindsay Splichal will show her work at Public Functionary. The pop-up event, titled "Subjective," is a conversation of sorts about truth, the notion of consensus, and ideas of self. Splichal does this through abstract compositions that find order in chaos, blurring lines of what seems to be real as a way to question what is true. By replicating objects and separating them from context (for example, there's a crumpled, Xeroxed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 ▶

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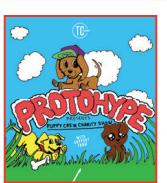
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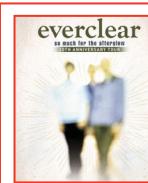
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SEPTEMBER 2



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CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ▶

piece of paper on glass), Splichal uses uncertainty to challenge and explore the rules around us. Following Thursday's exhibition, Splichal will hold an open conversation on Friday from 4 to 6:30 p.m. This is the artist's last show in the Twin Cities before she heads to Detroit to pursue her MFA, so see it while it's here. 7 to 10:30 p.m. Free. 1400 12th Ave. NE, Minneapolis. —SHEILA REGAN

COMEDY

DARLENE WESTGOR

THE JOKE JOINT COMEDY CLUB

"Life is pretty good; I'm very happy," says Darlene Westgor. America's quintessential mom comic (fans will recall she won *Nick@Nite's* Search for the Funniest Mom in America), she is now an empty-nester and loving it. "I'm becoming a shut-in and I love it. My friends are concerned, but it's easier to write now that my kids have moved out." One son has moved to Los Angeles and works for *American Idol* while the other is in New York running a craft brewery. She talks to them often—when they're stuck in traffic. Raising two sons taught her a lot. "I understand men more than I ever would have," she says. "I realize all the mistakes women make with their expectations versus what the reality is." Onstage, she breaks down how being a mom helped bring all that together. "Every neighborhood had a mom like me, with a house where all the kids hung out," she says. "A little wine in the coffee cup and shot on the counter." Most of what she discusses in her set are things that go through her head in the course of a day, both memories and new observations. "I have a lot to talk about," she says. "But I don't talk about work, because no one cares about that. That's

only funny if you're at a work party." 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday; 9:45 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$14-\$26. 801 Sibley Memorial Hwy., Lilydale; 651-330-9078. **Through Saturday** —P.F. WILSON

FRIDAY 9.1

CONVENTION

METACon

HYATT REGENCY MINNEAPOLIS

There are a lot of conventions that celebrate various aspects of nerd life. Comic cons, horror cons, and anime cons have all come through the Twin Cities at different times this past year. But there's only one convention that brings together all the nerdiest and geekiest subcultures for one super convention. MetaCon, taking place this Friday through Sunday, unites sci-fi, music, video games, steampunk, and a whole lot more in what will be like the all-star game of geekdom. They've got tons of unique panels and exhibits no matter what you're into, whether it's Mario Kart or Marvel heroes. There's even a talk titled "Gunpla 101: Your Guide to Plastic Giant Robots." If that's not enough, they'll have free autograph signings with animators, artists, and voice actors, and nighttime events like a nerdcore hip-hop show, standup comedy, and a Voltron sleepover party. Basically, if you're into anything creative, unique, fun, and geeky, you're going to find something you'll like. Tickets start at just \$30—which is way more affordable than some conventions—making this the most fun and economical con to kick off your fall. For tickets and more information, visit metaconvention.com. \$30 day pass; \$40 three-day pass; \$150 platinum admission. 1300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis. **Through Sunday** —PATRICK STRAIT

2017 Minnesota Renaissance Festival

Weekends & Labor Day
AUG. 19 – OCT. 1



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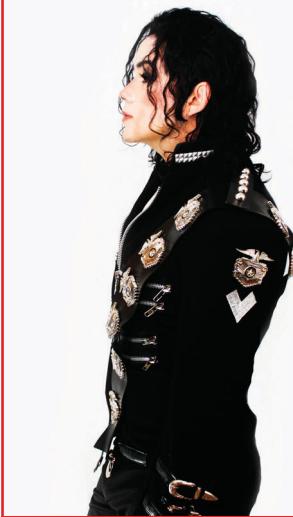
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A-LIST

SATURDAY 9.2

ART

ILLUMINATED REEF

CAN CAN WONDERLAND

Since its debut at the 2016 Northern Spark Festival, the Illuminated Reef has been a shining light of art and science. It's all brought to you by the Illuminated Reef Collective, a group born out of a 2014 Barebones production, *Metamorphosoup*, that featured an undersea landscape scene. The artists decided to expand on the concept during Northern Spark, and have enjoyed wild success since, including a spot at Indianapolis' IN Light IN Festival. Filled with lantern-lit sea creatures that guests can "pilot" through the reef, this interactive installation now holds court at Can Can Wonderland, St. Paul's delightful artist-designed mini-golf course and playground. Made from repurposed materials and lit by UV lights, the Reef will come alive again during Labor Day weekend, providing spectacle underneath the water tower outside. Become a part of the performance as you "swim" your creature around the reef, accompanied by music. 8 p.m. to midnight Saturday and Sunday. \$10-\$20 donation requested. 755 Prior Ave. N, Ste. 4, St. Paul; 651-925-2261. Through Sunday —SHEILA REGAN

SPORTS

BRIT'S PUB VAULT

BRIT'S PUB & EATING ESTABLISHMENT



The only thing better than day drinking? Day drinking and pole vaulting! For the fourth year, Brit's is bringing together this perfect marriage of booze and athletics. Competitions will be taking place throughout the day, with divisions ranging from student to professional. Watch vaulters fly through the air for your boozed-up enjoyment. Admission is free, but if past years are any indication this event will fill up quickly. While there will be plenty of great pole vaulting during the day, there is over \$5,400 in prize money up for grabs in the professional category, which means the best men and women from all over the country will be converging on the rooftop lawn for the final session around 8 p.m. For those of us who should probably keep our feet planted, the bar will be offering drink specials. All ages. 9:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Free. 1110 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-3908. —PATRICK STRAIT



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p.m. \$10. 4814 Chicago Ave., Minneapolis; 612-822-2104. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

SUNDAY 9.3

THEATER

AVENTURERA

STATE THEATRE

Rejecting rigid adherence to the conventions of musical theater, the



They make up for speed with cuteness

COURTESY OF CANTERBURY

proudly Mexican stage spectacular known as *Aventurera* will be making a one-night stand at the State Theatre. Based on the 1950 Mexican cinema classic, the story revolves around a desperate young woman named Elena who, seeking a better life in Juarez, instead finds herself dancing in a sordid establishment that doubles as a brothel. Naturally enough, this nefarious den of showgirls and gangsters leads to a series of intriguing encounters and deceptive deeds, each ushering Elena deeper into the criminal underworld. Despite the noir narrative, playwright Carlos Olmos' adaptation puts the emphasis on dazzling pageantry, offering a cavalcade of sequined dancers shimmying seductively against zoot-suited mobsters, pausing only long enough to deliver a comic monologue before the propulsive beat of a rhumba kicks in and the mesmerizing choreography begins anew. *Aventurera* kicked off a tradition of stocking its cast with popular figures from telenovelas and sports, a novelty that continues to this day. The results have proven wildly popular and remarkably enduring, rising from an inauspicious 1997 debut at the Teatro Blanquita to become Mexico's longest-running musical. True to its roots, this touring production is performed entirely in Spanish, and features an immersive cabaret set design with a cast of Mexican stars (including the widely revered Carmen Salinas). 6 p.m. \$69-\$104. 805 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. —BRAD RICHASON

MONDAY 9.4

SPORTS

WIENER DOG WARS

CANTERBURY PARK

Dachshunds can't cover ground as quickly as horses can, but the frantic effort they put in at Canterbury's annual wiener dog race is part of the fun. This Paul; 651-228-9274. —ERICA RIVERA

Labor Day, these majestic (and stubby) creatures will take to the track to race against each other. There can be only one champion, so 72 canines will square off in seven different heats to determine who's top dog. In addition to buffets and bars inside Canterbury, Monday will be especially family-friendly, with face painting, pony rides, and a petting zoo open until 6 p.m. 12:45 to 6 p.m. \$7.25; kids 17 and under are free. 1100 Canterbury Rd. S., Shakopee; 952-445-7223. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

TUESDAY 9.5

POETRY/READING

**DONTE COLLINS
AND DANEZ SMITH**

BLACK DOG CAFE

Everyone confronts their mortality at some point, but few do so as poetically as Danez Smith. In the new book *Don't Call Us Dead*, the black queer poet from St. Paul unravels his thoughts and feelings on the page after being diagnosed HIV-positive. "look, i'm not going to manufacture/any more sadness. it happened./it's happening," he writes in "every day is a funeral & a miracle." The virus isn't the only enemy, however; being black can be just as life-threatening in this country. Smith critiques American culture without preaching; in "dinosaurs in the hood," the poet imagines a "Jurassic Park meets *Friday* meets *The Pursuit of Happyness*" action movie where "no one kills the black boy." Indignation is juxtaposed with tender love poems like "bare": "if love is a room/of broken glass, leave me to dance/until my feet are memory." He'll be reading pieces along with his mentee, Donte Collins, who will share poems from his new book, *Softer*. 7 p.m. Free; \$10-\$26 VIP. 308 Prince St., St. Paul; 651-228-9274. —ERICA RIVERA

ORDWAY



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Thursday, Sept 14 - Battle of The Bands (No Cover)

Friday, Sept 15 - Hookers & Blow (\$5 Cover)

Saturday, Sept 16 - Steeling Dan (\$10 Cover)

Thursday, Sept 21 - Battle of The Bands (No Cover)

Friday, Sept 22 - Fleetwood Mac Attack (\$5 Cover)

Saturday, Sept 23 - Crow, Special guest

Lisa Wenger, Doors 8pm, Show 9pm

\$15 Cover, Groups of 4 or more call for reservations.

Wednesday, Sept 27 - Badfinger - Benefit For Taylor, 6pm - 10pm

Thursday, Sept 28 - Battle of The Bands (No Cover)

Friday, Sept 29 - Tommy Castro and the Painkillers

Stompin' Ground Record Release Party

8pm doors / 9pm show

(\$12 Cover) Groups of four or more call for reservations.



Saturday, Sept 30 - Davina and The Vagabonds (9pm, \$10 Cover)

Saturday, Oct 14 - MN Blues Society 2017 Hall of Fame Awards

Saturday, Oct 21 - Dare Force, With Arena, \$12 Adv / \$15 Dos

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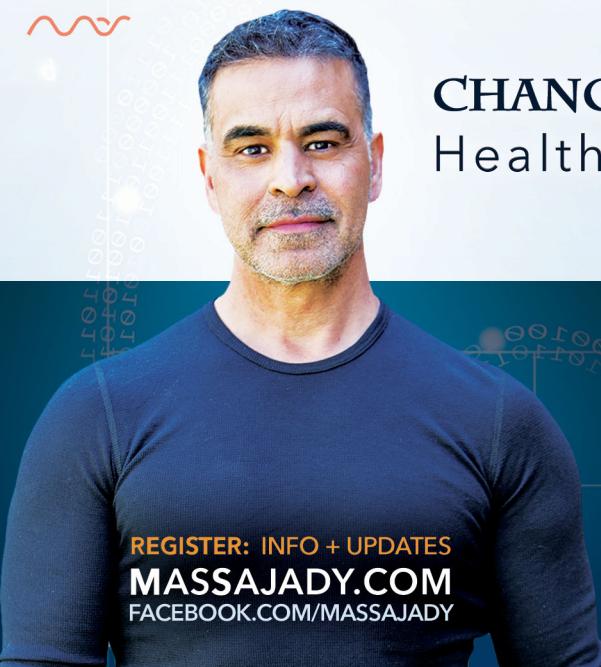
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WOMEN & SPIRITUALITY | ROCHESTER

at MAYO CIVIC CENTER, ROCHESTER, MN

11AM-12PM | CAN THIS MAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE IN 10 MINS OR LESS?

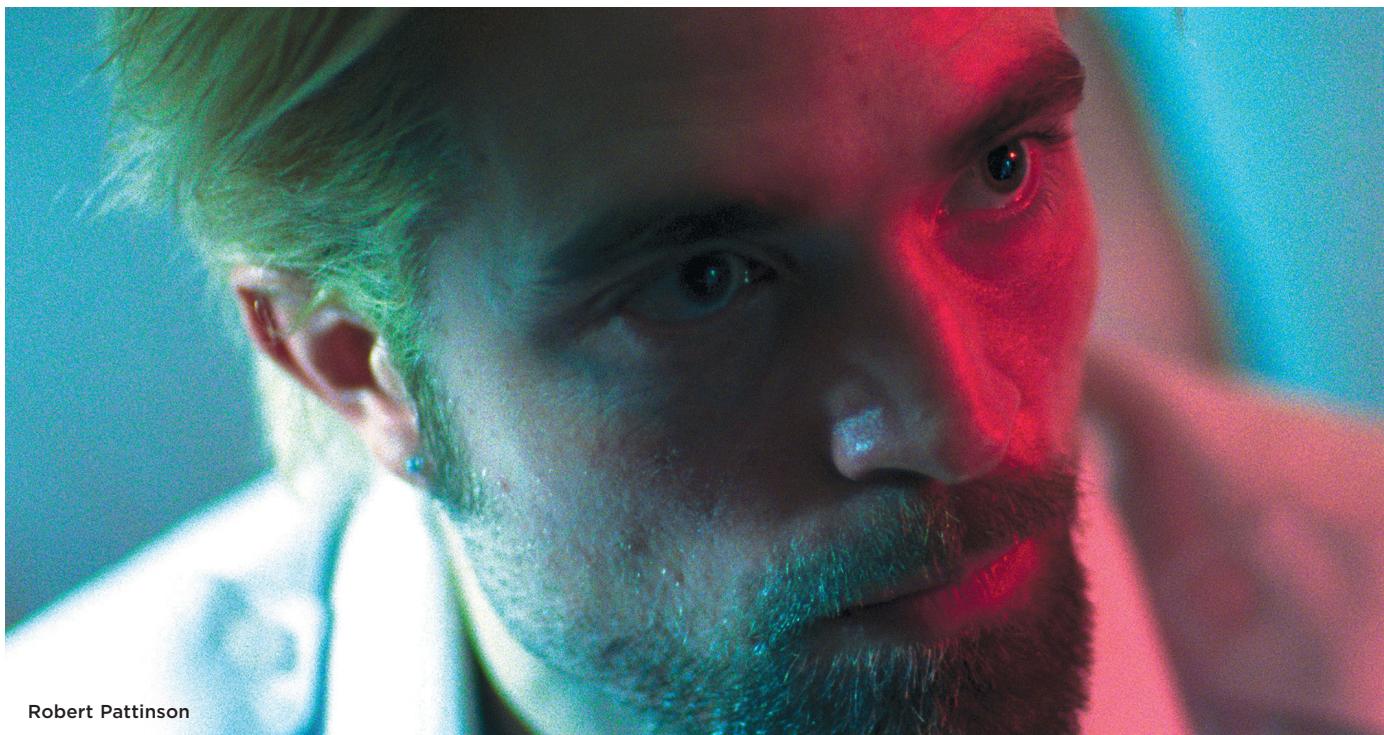
1:30PM-3PM | DEACTIVATION OF OLD PROGRAMS

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MURPHY'S LAW AND ORDER

Everything that can go wrong does go wrong in *Good Time*



Robert Pattinson

PHOTO COURTESY OF A24

BY TONY LIBERA

Fiction Writing 101 says to put your characters through hell, and the Safdie Brothers do so with gusto. Their latest crime film, *Good Time*, rockets its sketchy protagonist from one disaster to the next, blending an aggressive realism with a rate of failure so rapid-fire it's almost farcical.

After Connie (Robert Pattinson) and his mentally disabled brother, Nick (Ben Safdie), rob a bank, a dye pack explodes, sending Connie's plan off the rails. He stashes the money in a Domino's bathroom, but a passing patrol car causes Nick to panic and flee. A quick chase ends with Nick running through a mall door and knocking himself unconscious. The rest of the movie finds Connie haphazardly trying to get his brother out of jail by any insane means necessary.

Good Time abounds in throwback

vibes, with a grittiness rarely seen in movies these days. It was shot on film and with minimal lighting setups, so from its grainy opening image, we're given the sense this is going to be a visceral picture. The Cannes award-winning soundtrack by Oneohtrix Point Never works in full harmony with the visuals, its dark melodies and edgy drones heightening the sense of freneticism and uneasiness we feel as Connie breaks into a hospital or cons his way into a family's house for the night.

And thematically, Connie's odyssey through the grimy New York night feels like something from a bygone era. It's like a '70s Scorsese flick for whatever this decade is called. (Scorsese is even

producing Ben and Joshua Safdie's next feature.)

The lynchpin here is Pattinson, whose performance is captivating in the masterful way he rounds out Connie. The

character is at once streetwise and an idiot, rolling with punch after punch despite the futility of it all. There's no small amount of scumbaggery here, but Pattinson never lets us forget the unrelenting love the character feels for his brother.

To be clear, this isn't *Dog Day Afternoon*. Connie does or allows enough extremely deplorable stuff to go down en route to saving his brother that we feel far more conflicted about our investment in his success. That nuance is a big part of what

GOOD TIME

Directed by Ben and Joshua Safdie
Now showing, area theaters

makes *Good Time* so interesting. The Safdies and Pattinson make us wrestle with the fact that Connie is a really bad person. We're pulled into the mud.

Pattinson has always seemed like one of those guys whose talent was being wasted on a particularly braindead supernatural franchise, so it's nice to see him—with wads of *Twilight* money setting him up for life—lending his acting chops to the service of better films. It would be great to see him follow the Daniel Radcliffe or Ryan Gosling route and go full bore into the weird stuff.

For now, *Good Time* serves as a marker of both Pattinson's skill and that of the Safdies. It's a tough film to watch—and yet it leaves us wanting more. **EP**

There's no
small amount
of scumbaggery
here.

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MAN OF LA MANCHA

SEP 13 - OCT 22



Written by Dale Wasserman • Lyrics by Joe Darion • Music by Mitch Leigh
Directed by Peter Rothstein • Music Direction by Denise Prosek

Meghan Kreidler, Zachary Garcia, Andre Shoals, Rodolfo Nieto, Photo by Allen Weeks

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Written by
Dale Wasserman

Lyrics by
Joe Darion

Music by
Mitch Leigh

SEP 13 - OCT 22, 2017

**BOLDLY
RE-IMAGINED**



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Tod Petersen and
Peter Rothstein

Musical
Arrangements by
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NOV 29 - DEC 30, 2017

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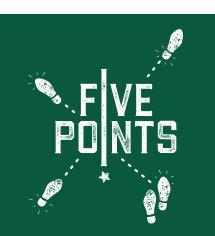


Music & Lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim

Book by
John Weidman

FEB 7 - MAR 18, 2018

**SONDHEIM'S MOST
CONTROVERSIAL**



Book by
Harrison David Rivers

Music by
Ethan D. Pakchar & Douglas Lyons

Lyrics by
Douglas Lyons

APR 4 - MAY 6, 2018

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Music by
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LEARNING TO FLY

Human moments help trans-themed *Ballast* soar



NADIA HONARY

BY JAY GABELER

The irony of *Ballast*, as a metaphor, is that it's... well, a little heavy. It's prominent in Georgette Kelly's play, along with a number of other symbolic situations encountered in dreams by characters negotiating intensely emotional personal challenges.

Ballast had its world premiere this spring in San Diego. It's now playing at Mixed Blood under the auspices of 20% Theatre Company Twin Cities. The play centers on an adult woman and a teenage boy, both trans, whose lives become, at least briefly, connected.

The woman is Grace (Eileen Noonan), a pastor who has transitioned with the support of her wife, Zoe (Olivia Wilusz). As Grace struggles with the evasions of her bishop (Marcel Michelle), Zoe tries to understand what it means to be in love with a woman who she understood to be a man when they wed.

Meanwhile, the boy, Xavier (Jayden Simmonds), has the confident support of his girlfriend, Savannah (Piper Quinn). That means the world to Xavier, but he still faces a family—and a society—that struggles to accept him for who he is. Savannah may be a good influence for Xavier's heart, but she also tempts him into repeated thefts of property, so warnings for Xavier to be wary of the girl aren't entirely baseless.

Claire Avitable directs her cast in no-frills staging, on a simple set by Karen Lee Tait-Fries: a table, a bed, a couple chairs, a pulpit that doubles as a liquor cabinet. (Nice touch.) Composer Walken Schweigert's "dream music" is a little cloying, but serves the useful function of helping us

BALLAST

Mixed Blood Theatre
1501 S. Fourth St., Minneapolis
612-227-1188; through September 10

distinguish when characters are interacting in the real world from when they're lost in their restless reveries.

In a recurring dream, Zoe takes flying lessons from an instructor (Zealot Hamm) who hints that Zoe needs to let go of her baggage, that she needs to keep her focus on the future. Hamm also plays a "figment" of Xavier's imagination, a mysterious doppelgänger who challenges the boy to see himself clearly and to show that true self to his loved ones.

The play's episodic structure, with frequent blackouts marking cuts between short scenes, is frustrating given that the show is at its strongest when its conversations linger; when Zoe and Grace air their mutual frustrations, or when Savannah tenderly coaxes Xavier out of his shell. One of the most compelling interactions is between Savannah and Zoe, who envies the younger woman's more intuitive understanding of how to negotiate life with a trans partner.

If the production is a little rough around the edges, well, so is life. The four leading actors give performances pulsing with empathy and vulnerability. Kelly's script doesn't promise any easy answers to their questions, and while the central metaphor is overworked, it's clearly apt: An airplane can't go backwards, and neither can any of these characters, even if they're sometimes tempted to glance in that direction. **CP**



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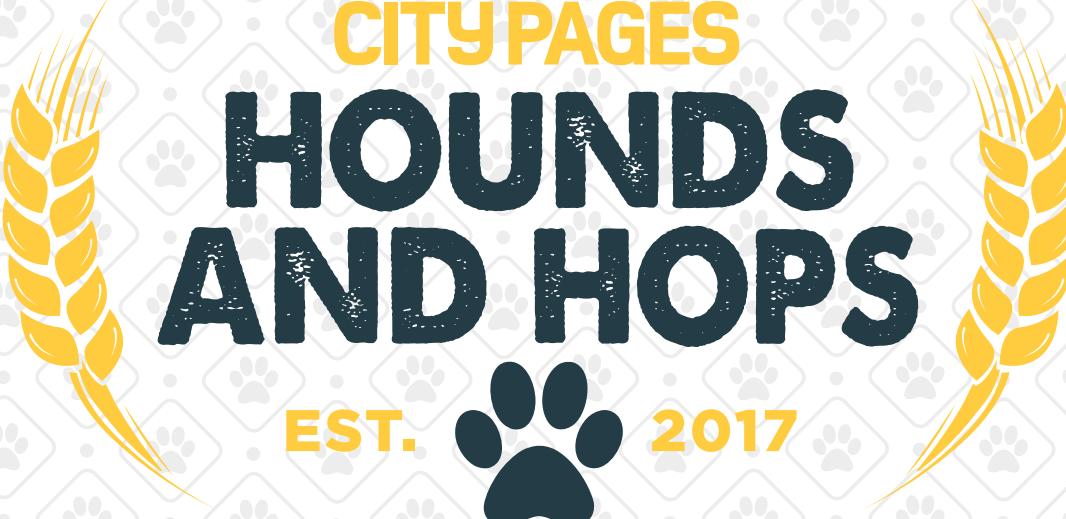
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FLIP PHONE XXL Keeping it sexy at the Short Shorts Dance Party on August 19 **BY AMY GEE**



MIDGE RELLER

24, MARKETING SPECIALIST

What are you wearing?

Shoes from Buffalo Exchange, everything else from Urban Outfitters.

Describe your style:

A cartoon version of a sad beauty queen.

Who's your current style crush?

Ned Flanders.

What is one thing in your wardrobe that you can't live without?

The Moody Blues shirt from their '96 Summer Tour. I stole it from my older brother in middle school and will never return it.



ALEXANDER ROYCE

30, HAIRSTYLIST

What are you wearing?

Demonia boots, Balmain shirt, everything else from Amazon.

Describe your style:

Tastefully eclectic.

What's your best style tip?

Do you, Boo!

What is one thing in your wardrobe that you can't live without?

Boots.



ERIC WASHINGTON

31, NONPROFIT WORK FOR RED RIBBON RIDE

What are you wearing?

Abercrombie & Fitch flannel and shorts, shirt from a friend's closet, cut-off high top Chuck Taylors, hat from a lost and found bin.

Describe your style:

Inspired by a particular mood, time, or overall vibe.

What's your best style tip?

Don't forget the details as they make the outfit! Slight scrunch here and a minor cuff there will make your outfit unique.

What is one thing in your wardrobe that you can't live without?

My red bandana. I don't see many men rocking one!



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LET THERE BE DRUMS

Tim Ellis, the Twin Cities' go-to drum seller and manufacturer, is reopening his shop

BY TIGGER LUNNEY

“My first tag line was ‘Ellis Drum Company: And No Fucking Guitars.’” Tim Ellis’ laugh is huge and crisp, big enough to drown out the band warming up a few feet away. Ellis, business partner Lane Petersen, and I have staked out a corner of the backstage dressing room at Triple Rock Social Club, hoping for a quiet, undistracted conversation, but soundcheck is fucking with us. Our timing, it would seem, is a little off. (Rim shot.)

“You want me to take care of that?” Ellis asks, pointing to the stage with a big grin. “Hey, we’re conducting important business in here!”

And indeed, the Twin Cities’ premier custom drum company and retail store is back in business, after a yearlong absence. On September 23, Ellis Drum Co. will return to the retail market with a new shop at 234 Concord Exchange in South St. Paul.

Ellis, a lanky, bespectacled figure who’s been a professional drummer for decades, first went into business in St. Paul’s Midway more than 25 years ago. In that time, his shop, and the custom drum brand he started building in its basement, became one of the most respected drum companies in the nation. Unfortunately, retail decline and challenges brought about by light rail and Snelling Avenue construction caused Ellis to close down in 2016, a move that proved a huge disappointment to the Twin Cities drumming community.

“The reaction was immediate,” Ellis says. “People telling me, ‘There’s nowhere to go now.’” Sure, there are other drum shops. But Ellis didn’t just buy and sell. He provided a space for drummers to come together—a point he makes again and again.

“The drumming community is a tight network of guys and gals,” he says. “We all know each other. We all hang out together and share licks. The drumming community likes a place to hang—not just a place to purchase but also a place to hang out and talk drums—and that’s what Ellis Drum Shop was always about.”

“We’re of the mindset that people still want to go to a brick-and-mortar shop



and see really great high-end drums and talk to people who know a lot of drums,” Petersen adds.

At a glance, he and Ellis look like unlikely partners. But Petersen, best known in town as the drummer for Dillinger Four, and also a doctor of behavioral therapy, was one of Ellis’ earliest employees. “I didn’t work there because I needed to. I worked there because I wanted to be there.”

Though Ellis closed the doors on his retail space, his custom drum brand has continued, maintaining an impressive roster of professional rock and jazz drummers, including Dave King, Ben Ivascu and Drew Christopherson, J.T. Bates, Jay Epstein, and Phil Hay. Ellis drums serve as the house kits at First Avenue, the Turf Club, and Amsterdam Bar. A good share of the custom drum work once done under the shop moved to Petersen’s basement.

There, the punk rocker and the classic jazz drummer developed a partnership nurtured as much by their differences as by their common passion.

“I cherish the fact that Lane and I are on two different planets when it comes to music,” Ellis says. “Lane’s got his world I’m afraid to enter, and I’ve got my world that Lane probably doesn’t understand, but we work great together. Lane saved my life when it came to this business.”

“Tim and I are both working drummers,” says Petersen. “We’re both in active bands. Between the two of us we’ve toured everywhere. Tim’s been playing drums since before I was born, probably, and I’m not young. Between the two of us, we’re real-world drummers. If you’re talking about wanting a drum set that has a particular sound, or that’s going to hold up well on the road, we’ve both been there, done that.”

So there’s a different level of expertise. The beauty of Ellis drums is that they can span from punk drumming to hardcore jazz, and everything in between.”

“And do we build the drums differently for different genres?” says Ellis. “No. It’s the same drums.”

Initially, the two partners weren’t looking for a retail location, just a better workspace for the custom drum line. Then they found 1,000 square feet of retail area in South St. Paul, a historic water-pumping station for the stockyards dating back to the 1890s. Just two minutes north of 494 on Concord. “A classy, funky little building with a lot of character,” Ellis calls it.

“One of the awesome things about the new spot is that especially during the warmer months—which you know is most of the year in Minnesota—we have a great outdoor space to have the drumming community come and hang,” says Petersen. “We’re definitely going to plan events around that.”

“The new shop isn’t going to be like the old shop,” says Ellis. “The old shop carried literally everything. The new shop is geared more toward a space to manufacture the custom line, but it comes with a retail area. So we can handle our drums and other boutique manufacturers while still doing online orders and getting people what they want.”

In addition, Ellis says, the new space will host lessons, drum clinics, and seminars. “People will be able to come in and see something cool,” while still having the ability to purchase or order any drum they want, especially for those who can’t afford the high-end custom kits of the Ellis Drum Co. line.

Still, that custom line is a huge point of pride to Ellis and Petersen. Many custom manufacturers will create drums to customer order—a sort of Burger King “have it your way” idea. But Ellis and Petersen prefer to start from their own sense of what well-crafted drums are.

“We’ll do anything you want as long as it isn’t wrong,” Petersen says. “I mean, if I want to go buy a violin I’m not going to tell Stradivarius how to make it.”

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MUSIC CRITICS' PICKS



NICOLE ANNE ROBBINS
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DR. LONNIE SMITH

DAKOTA, WEDNESDAY 8.30

In 2016 Dr. Lonnie Smith issued his first album on Blue Note in 45 years, *Evolution*, returning with a flourish to the label where he established his reputation in the '60s. Smith is a virtuoso magician of the Hammond B-3 organ, a physician of slippery soul-jazz grooves, funky rhythms, and marvelous melodies. *Evolution* essentially puts Smith's career in contemporary context. Expanding his usual trio with guitarist Jonathan Kreisberg and drummer Johnathan Blake, Smith reinvigorates old and new nuggets with a muscled-up band featuring horns and second drummer Joe Dyson. Robert Glasper adds sparkling piano to a furiously funky "Play It Back." Tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano guests on the sultry "Afrodesia," which he originally played with Smith in the '70s. Smith returns to the trio format (also the Dakota setup) for fresh takes on the standards "Straight No Chaser" and "My Favorite Things." 7p.m. \$35-\$45. 1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-5299.

—RICK MASON

BLEACHED

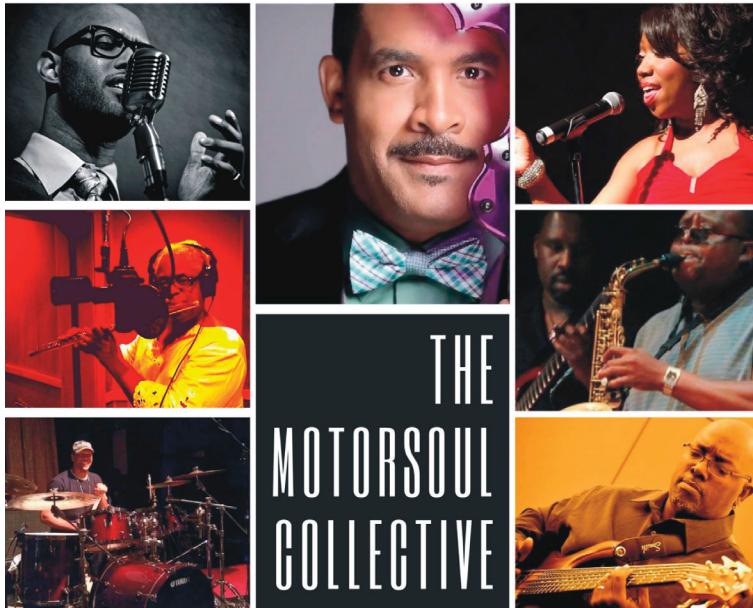
7TH ST ENTRY, THURSDAY 8.31

Los Angeles four-piece Bleached, featuring sisters Jennifer and Jessica Clavin, emerged in the early '10s as one of the best new California rock groups. Their first three EPs led them to signing with Dead Oceans, the venerable label on which they truly began to thrive with their efficient style: fuzzy, surfy indie rock mostly about loving, missing, and being annoyed with boys. *Welcome the Worms*, last year's follow-up to the band's 2013 full-length debut, *Ride Your Heart*, was more nuanced and muscular, thanks in part to the production from alt-rock wizard Joe Chicarelli. This March, the band returned with the four-song quickie *Can You Deal?*, which suggests the brawn of *Welcome the Worms* is here to stay and featured the added magic of Bloc Party and Mars Volta producer Alex Newport. Thursday's show at the Entry happens to be Bleached's last

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MUSIC CRITICS' PICKS

headlining tour stop before they spend two months opening for Against Me! all over the country. The Dirty Nil open. 18+. 7:30 p.m. \$14. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —MICHAEL MADDEN

LIL YACHTY

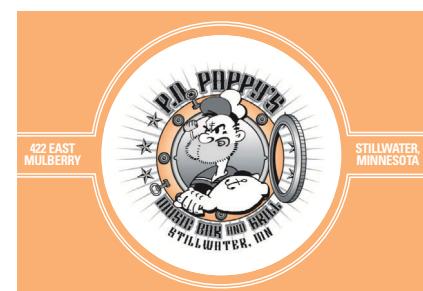
MYTH, THURSDAY 8.31

Atlanta native and self-proclaimed "king of the teens" Lil Yachty just turned 20 last week, but he's already had an irreversible impact on hip-hop by inspiring a debate over whether he's even hip-hop at all. Influenced by the potent simplicity and DIY spirit of 21st-century game-changers like Soulja Boy, Yachty has few musical things in common with rappers from the previous generation, aside from a vague vocal resemblance to Andre 3000. Yachty's breakthrough came with the platinum-selling earworm "One Night," and ever since then, the kid with the beaded red hair has been hard to miss, what with his new debut album, his mixtapes, and additional songs with everyone from Chance the Rapper to Macklemore. Listening to too many of Yachty's songs at once reveals his over-reliance on certain topics and vocals' styles (often totally slathered in Auto-Tune), but his best songs are supremely fun and joyous. Though Yachty has bigger songs in the rest of the country, his inevitable performance of his single "Minnesota" will surely set off a giddy and explosive crowd reaction on Thursday. 8 p.m. \$29.50-\$150. 3090 Southlawn Dr., Maplewood; 651-779-6984. —MICHAEL MADDEN

DENT MAY

7TH ST. ENTRY, FRIDAY 9.1

Between his third and fourth albums, Mississippian Dent May loaded up the truck and he moved to Beverly—well, maybe not the Hills, but not far away in the warm Southern California sun, where his clever tunes blossomed into breezy, radiant, palm-tree pop laced with lush Beach Boys spirit. The new one, *Across the Multiverse*, revels in the buoyant glow of La La Land myth, the music glistening in sheets of diamond-like droplets orchestrated to ensure May's melodies shine. May's soaring falsetto surfs '70s vintage waves with Brian Wilson-like charm, and hints of Randy Newman-style irony surface in the lyrics, which are riddled with uncertainty and melancholy that make his joyous-sounding tunes a bit unsettling. "Hello cruel world," he sings in the opening song, "are you real or just a dream?" "Looming existential dread" plagues "Dream 4 Me," and wistfulness hangs like Spanish moss in "90210" as May sheepishly acknowledges his outsider status. Suzie and Devata Daun open. 8 p.m. 18+. \$10. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —RICK MASON



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Hard to Do

Some difficult truths about breaking up



Dan Savage

My ex-boyfriend and I were together for a year and a half. He is a silver fox who is significantly older than me. I was 23 when we met and he was 58. It was supposed to be a fling, but it evolved into a beautiful romance. But after much consideration (he has a vasectomy and already has four kids and will be retiring soon), we ended it three months ago. It was heartbreaking, but we made a conscious decision to be close friends and talk every day. Out of the blue last week, he asked me if I had a boyfriend. I don't, but I was coincidentally about to go on my first date since the breakup. He proceeded to tell me he "kinda" has a new girlfriend, a woman closer to his age. This was not something I wanted to hear, which he could tell from the silence that met this disclosure. This conversation ruined my weekend. I have been unable to eat or sleep. The guy I went on a date with was sexy—not a love connection, but a bangtown prospect—but I was too emotionally fucked to do anything with him. Do I explain these thoughts to my ex? Let time do the healing? Why did my ex feel the need to tell me about his new girlfriend?

HEARTBROKEN OVER NEW EX'S YUMMY

Your ex told you about his new girlfriend because you two are close friends, right? And close friends typically confide in each other about their love lives, don't they? And that's what you wanted, isn't it?

Backing up: It's always inspiring when two people manage to salvage a friendship after their romantic relationship ends. But it's not possible to go in an instant from lovers to besties who talk on the phone every day. You got your heart broken, HONEY, and only time can cauterize that particular wound. Your reaction to the news that your ex has a new girlfriend proves your post-breakup friendship wasn't a "conscious decision" but an ill-advised rush. And while the physical aspect of your relationship with Mr. Silver Fox ended three months ago, you never got out of each other's pants emotionally.

I don't think you should explain anything to your ex right now, because I don't think you should talk to your ex for the next six months or so. You need to get on with your life—and getting on that new guy is a good place to start.

I'm a 26-year-old heterosexual female, and I was recently dumped by my boyfriend. He was my first love and the person I lost my virginity to. We'd been seeing each other for a little over a year. I had sex with someone else while I was seeing my ex (it was a more casual relationship in the beginning). I wanted more, and I'm not 100 percent sure but think that's what scared him off. I went into a depression and started seeing a therapist. This all happened a little more than a month ago. Friends tell me that the "best way to get over someone is to get under someone else," but I'm not sure what to do. I'm pretty sure I'm doing the thing I shouldn't be doing: holding out hope my ex will decide he made a horrible decision and want to be with me again. I know it is idiotic to have this hope. Can you give me some direction?

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE MY PAIN

This may not be helpful in the short term, DUMP, but it's not idiotic to hold out hope your ex will take you back. It could happen—indeed, it has happened for lots of folks. I have two friends who are married to men who dumped them, regretted it, and begged to be taken back. The trick, however, is to assume it won't happen and make a conscious effort to get on with your life. (And, if necessary, a conscious effort to get under someone else.) Your boyfriend/first love/first fuck dumped you a little more than a month ago—you're allowed, one month and change later, to live in hope of a reconciliation. Odds are good, though, that it's a false hope, DUMP, so don't pass on any solid offers and keep seeing that therapist.

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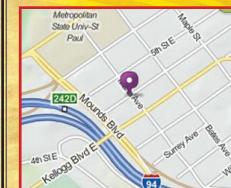
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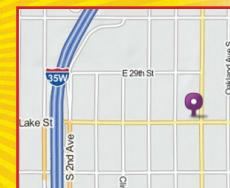
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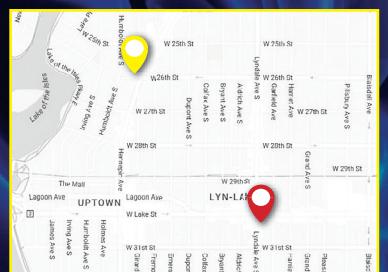
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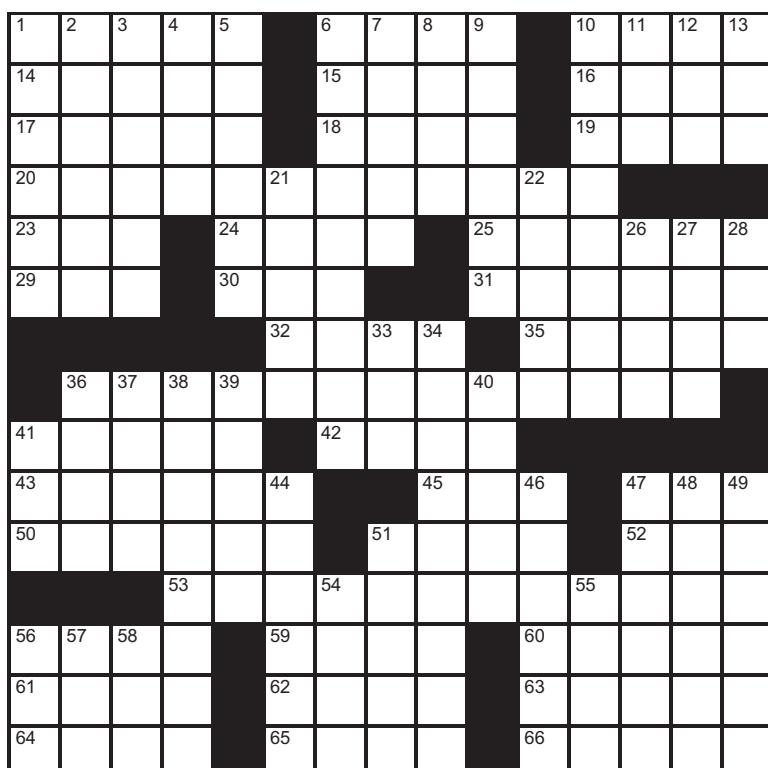
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Across

1 With 28-Down, surfing annoyances
6 Close pals, initially
10 BuzzFeed fodder
14 Team building
15 ___ Grey
16 Compulsion
17 Escargot piece
18 Get the hell out
19 Bit of sparkle
20 Christmastime rental
23 Capacity measure used in HVAC
24 Attention to detail
25 Yankee hurler Masahiro
29 "On the other hand..."
30 Compass dir.
31 It's got an electric motor
32 Embalmer's subj.
35 Bourbon Street necklace (around Mardi Gras)
36 Jokey way to describe the food truck industry ... and a hint to this puzzle's hidden theme
41 Painter Margaret who does "big-eyed waifs"
42 Nintendo platform
43 Relating to money
45 Afternoon timeout
47 NL team with the most World Series wins, 11
50 He may make your skin crawl
51 ICU staff
52 Org. with range rovers?

53 Place for battle planning
56 "Like that's gonna happen"
59 Scum
60 Do the honors, as in November (or October, if you're Canadian)
61 Man of the hour
62 Bit of light reading?
63 Barq's rival
64 Funk
65 Fuel-inefficient vehicles
66 Ancient poet

Down

1 Elapse
2 Very decorative
3 M&M variety
4 Condo building
5 Place for a king
6 Previously
7 "Keep dreaming!"
8 Stew over
9 Holmes, e.g.
10 Female with drones
11 Bitly result
12 Kroger rival
13 Religion that champions gardening
21 Homes for hermanas y hombres
22 "Let me get back to you"
26 Diminishing sea
27 "___ these days!"
28 See 1-Across
33 Blackbird
34 TV show whose theme

song is "Falling"
36 Israeli stateswoman Golda
37 Peace of mind
38 Someone up in a tree?
39 Jumped up
40 Celebrity chef Eddie whose autobiography was the basis for the TV show "Fresh Off the Boat"
41 Bucket chain
44 Navigation systems
46 First film to show a flushing toilet
47 Edda writer Sturluson
48 Treasure amounts
49 Most corny
51 Second-in-command, in some states: Abbr.
54 Baseball family name
55 Narc's attack
56 Vietnamese noodle soup
57 Gave victuals to
58 Do you might pick out

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